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Letter dated 22 October 2013 from the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

The United States held the presidency of the Security Council for the month of July 2013. An assessment of the work of the Council has been prepared under my supervision in consultation with the other members of the Council (see annex).

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Samantha **Power**

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Annex to the letter dated 22 October 2013 from the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Assessment of the work of the Security Council during the presidency of the United States of America (July 2013)

Africa

Burundi

On 22 July, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Office in Burundi (BNUB), Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, the Chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, Paul Seger, and the Permanent Representative of Burundi, Herménégilde Niyonzima, briefed the Security Council on Burundi. The Special Representative highlighted the opening of some political space in Burundi, but expressed concern that ongoing human rights abuses and the recent passage of a restrictive media law, coupled with poor economic growth, threatened Burundian stability. The Chair of the Burundi configuration stressed that the same concerns undermined peacebuilding efforts. The Permanent Representative said that considerable progress had been made by Burundi on security sector reform, strengthening the rule of law, and the promotion of human rights. He asserted that the Government of Burundi could not consolidate those gains without international assistance and highlighted that while the international community to date had pledged 46 per cent of the $2.6 billion it had committed to poverty reduction in Burundi, little of that money had materialized. He cited the two recent political workshops for Burundian political actors, held with BNUB assistance, as opportunities that produced constructive changes to the electoral code and a road map for elections in 2015.

In closed consultations, members of the Council echoed the Special Representative's encouragement of the opening of political space in Burundi, but voiced serious concern over continued human rights abuses in Burundi, impunity for human rights offenders, and ongoing unresolved land disputes. Some members expressed concern over restrictive media and assembly laws that were recently promulgated. Several Council members mentioned the need to extend the mandate of BNUB until after the 2015 elections, with one member praising the mission's work while calling on the United Nations to respect the wishes of the Government of Burundi to draw down the mission sooner.

Côte d'Ivoire

On 18 July, the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Hervé Ladsous, briefed the Council on the Secretary-General's report on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI). He reviewed the progress and challenges in Côte d'Ivoire, noting that while the President, Alassane Ouattara, had introduced important political and economic reforms, the pace of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of the country's estimated 65,000 former combatants remained uneven. He indicated that the security situation, especially along the Ivorian-Liberian border, remained fragile, and reported on the efforts of UNOCI and the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) to assist the

Governments of Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia to improve cross-border security. The Under-Secretary-General also noted efforts to enhance inter-mission cooperation between UNOCI and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali. He noted the need for enhanced efforts to counter impunity for human rights violations. In closed consultations, Council members noted progress in some areas, as well as remaining challenges, such as the security situation. Some Council members expressed concern about the human rights situation and called for greater progress on security sector reform; disarmament, demobilization and reintegration; national reconciliation; and impartial justice. Many Council members discussed the Secretary-General's recommendation for a reduction in the military strength of UNOCI.

On 30 July, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2112 (2013), by which it extended the mandate of the mission until 30 June 2014, authorized the drawdown of two battalions and affirmed its intention to consider a further reduction of two battalions based on the security situation and the capacity of the Government of Côte d'Ivoire to assume the mission's security responsibilities.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

On 11 July, the Council held consultations to discuss the Secretary-General's report of 28 June on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) (S/2013/388). The Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations cited the many recent steps taken by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to meet its commitments under the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Region. He noted that, given the fractious political landscape in the country, a Security Council endorsement of those reforms would be essential to reducing any attempts by spoilers to hinder the efforts of the Government to meet its commitments.

Regarding the MONUSCO Intervention Brigade, the Under-Secretary-General noted that two of the three contingents were almost fully deployed, but were still awaiting their equipment, and the third contingent would deploy in the coming weeks. He stressed that the Brigade's activities would be well coordinated to complement the broader political process and would take into account any impact on the safety of civilians and United Nations peacekeepers. On the transfer of the MONUSCO tasks outlined in Council resolution 2098 (2013), he reiterated concerns that the United Nations country team in the Democratic Republic of the Congo would have to be adequately funded to take over critical mission functions such as demining and elections support. He promised a more thorough analysis of these issues in the Secretary-General's September report. He reported that a contractor had been identified to provide and operate unarmed unmanned aerial vehicles within MONUSCO, and an agreement had been signed on 12 July with the aim of having the vehicles operational by October or November 2013.

Members of the Council reiterated their support for the Framework and the steps taken by signatories to meet their commitments. One member accused elements of the leadership of the Intervention Brigade of colluding with commanders of the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR), and criticized the Secretary-General's reports on MONUSCO and the Framework for being inconsistent regarding their findings on external support to the Mouvement du

23 mars (M23). The Under-Secretary-General categorically denied any collaboration of the Intervention Brigade with FDLR and asked that further details be provided. As for the reference to "external support to M23", he explained that the assertion was based on "rumours" that MONUSCO heard from the field, and which it could not verify but was obligated to report to the Council. He noted that the Group of Experts would be in a better position to verify those allegations.

Several members of the Council echoed their support for the deployment of the Intervention Brigade, but noted the serious nature of the allegations against it, and requested that more details be provided. Some members expressed concern with the accusations on the reports of collaboration between the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC) and FDLR. Some members of the Council expressed the view that the deployment of unmanned aerial vehicles would be an important tool for the future of more effective United Nations peacekeeping, while other members indicated that the use of such vehicles in any other mission beyond MONUSCO should be considered only after a full evaluation of the outcomes of their use within MONUSCO. Members of the Council reiterated their support for the MONUSCO mandate and conveyed the importance of receiving a detailed road map and timeline for the transfer of tasks from MONUSCO to the United Nations country team, as requested in resolution 2098 (2013).

On 22 July, the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan, Agshin Mehdiyev, briefed the Council in closed consultations in his capacity as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004) on the Committee's work, including deliberations on the midterm report of the Group of Experts. Council members noted the importance of proper implementation of the sanctions regime and the work of the Group of Experts, particularly given the current political situation. Council members raised concerns over the continued activities of M23, the human rights violations allegedly committed by FARDC, the Experts' finding of local-level coordination between the armed forces and FDLR and continued — but limited — external support being provided to M23, and activities of other armed groups that continued to violate the sanctions and exacerbate the humanitarian crisis. Many Council members also highlighted the need to break the link between the illicit trade in natural resources and the conflict. However, one member accused the Group of not conducting its investigations in a professional, impartial and independent manner, including a lack of thorough consultation with concerned member States and not providing evidence to back its accusations.

On 25 July, the United States Secretary of State, John F. Kerry, convened a ministerial-level debate in the Security Council on the situation in the Great Lakes region, during which the Council adopted a presidential statement on the subject (S/PRST/2013/11). The Council received briefings from the Secretary-General; the President of the World Bank, Jim Yong Kim; the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General to the Great Lakes region, Mary Robinson; the Commissioner for Peace and Security of the African Union, Ramtane Lamamra; the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Uganda, Sam Kutesa; and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Raymond Tshibanda N'tungamulongo. Council member ministerial-level participation included the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Rwanda, Louise Mushikiwabo; the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Luxembourg, Jean Asselborn; the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Guatemala, Fernando Carrera; the Deputy Minister for Development of France, Pascal Canfin; and the Senior Adviser to the President of

Togo for diplomatic matters and cooperation, Kofi Esaw. In addition to Council members, representatives of Belgium, Burundi, the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mozambique, South Africa, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and the European External Action Service participated. Participants uniformly supported the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region, broadly praised reform efforts by the Democratic Republic of the Congo, welcomed the establishment of the MONUSCO Intervention Brigade, and reiterated calls for ending support for armed rebel groups. Council members underlined the importance of sustained international engagement in the region and greater donor coordination to ensure that assistance would support efforts to address the root causes of conflict in the Great Lakes. Member States also looked forward to the elaboration of the Framework's benchmarks and their adoption on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly as the mechanism to ensure full implementation of the agreement.

Peace and security in Africa (Sahel)

On 16 July, the Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2013/10) affirming its concern about the situation in the Sahel region and welcoming the development of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel and its three defining goals. The Council requested the Secretary-General to ensure effective implementation of the strategy through close collaboration between the Office of the Special Envoy for the Sahel, the United Nations Office for West Africa and relevant United Nations entities in the region.

The Council stressed the importance of a coordinated approach by all concerned United Nations entities in the region and recognized the importance for the strategy to be implemented in close consultation with States of the Sahel, West Africa and the Maghreb and relevant regional and subregional organizations. The Council called on the Sahel, West African and Maghreb States to enhance interregional cooperation and coordination to develop strategies that address security threats in the region.

The Council welcomed the intention of the Secretary-General to hold a high-level meeting on the Sahel on the sidelines of the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly and to undertake a visit to the region later in 2013 with the President of the World Bank Group.

Somalia

On 29 July, the Council released a statement to the press, condemning the suicide car bomb attack against the embassy of Turkey in Mogadishu which resulted in the death of one person and left several others wounded.

Somalia/Eritrea

On 18 July, the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea, Kim Sook, briefed the Council in closed consultations in his capacity as Chair of the Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea on the Committee's work over the past 120 days, including its deliberations on the final reports on Somalia and Eritrea of the Monitoring Group (S/2013/413 and S/2013/440) and discussion of the report of the Emergency Relief Coordinator to the Council pursuant to resolution 2060 (2012) (S/2013/415).

Council members highlighted the important role played by the Monitoring Group and stressed the need for strict implementation of sanctions. Council members raised concerns over the expansion of Al-Shabaab in regional countries, noted that the Federal Government of Somalia had made significant progress but faced continued political and security challenges, and condemned violations of the charcoal ban. Regarding Eritrea, some Council members stressed the need for Eritrea to grant access and cooperate with the Monitoring Group while others urged the Group to act with impartiality. On 24 July, the Council, by resolution 2111 (2013), extended the mandate of the Monitoring Group until 25 November 2014 and renewed the humanitarian relief provisions until 25 October 2014.

Sudan and South Sudan

On 8 July, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), Hilde Johnson, delivered a briefing, followed by consultations of the whole, on the situation in South Sudan. She highlighted progress made by South Sudanese officials, with UNMISS support, in developing South Sudan's political institutions; building capacity and professionalism in the police, justice and rule of law institutions; and the Government's use of amnesty to foster reconciliation with disaffected armed groups. She said that the security situation in south-east Jonglei State had deteriorated, with fighting between the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and the David Yau Yau militia, as well as looting, property damage, and harassment of civilians by both security forces and armed groups, leading to the displacement of thousands of civilians. She also expressed grave concern at the ongoing mobilization in Jonglei of armed Lou Nuer youth against the Murle tribe. The Special Representative was deeply concerned about the unknown status of thousands of Murle civilians located in areas currently inaccessible to the Mission. She welcomed a public statement by President Salva Kiir calling for accountability for the violations committed by ill-disciplined members of the security forces, but noted that more needed to be done to instil respect for international humanitarian and human rights law within those forces. She also voiced concern over human rights and violations of the status-of-forces agreement between South Sudan and the United Nations, constraints in the operating environment for the Mission and humanitarian agencies, including looting and damage to property of the latter by both armed groups and State security forces. The Special Representative also outlined the Mission's operational and logistical challenges in fulfilling its mandated tasks, and called for UNMISS to be provided with additional force enablers. She stressed the need to ensure accountability for the shooting down of the UNMISS helicopter in December 2012 and the attack in April 2013 on the Mission's ground convoy. Council members expressed concerns about the deteriorating security and humanitarian situation, including wide-scale displacements and risks of deadly inter-communal violence in Jonglei State, about human rights violations, and UNMISS resource and capability constraints, as well as about the need to conclude investigations into the downing of an UNMISS helicopter in December 2012 by SPLA and the ambush of an UNMISS ground convoy in April 2013. Some Council members expressed concern over restrictions on operations and threats to the security of the United Nations and humanitarian personnel and stressed the need for the Government of South Sudan to strictly adhere to the status-of-forces agreement with UNMISS.

On 11 July, the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations updated the Council during consultations of the whole on the Sudan and South Sudan and their compliance with resolution 2046 (2012). He said that there had been little concrete progress on bilateral relations, and in particular on the issues of oil transit and both sides' accusations of continued support to the rebel groups, despite the positive meetings held in Khartoum during the visit of the Vice President of South Sudan, Riek Machar, on 30 June and 1 July. The Under-Secretary-General reported that the African Union Commission and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) were collaborating to fulfil the workplan proposed on 9 June by the Chair of the African Union High-level Implementation Panel, Thabo Mbeki, but that those efforts were not expected to have reached their conclusions prior to the deadline of 7 August. He informed Council members that aerial reconnaissance by the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei as part of the Joint Border Verification Monitoring Mechanism remained suspended for security reasons after the Mechanism's headquarters had been shelled on 14 June by the Sudan People's Liberation Army-North (SPLM-N). On the two areas, the Under-Secretary-General reported that the Government of the Sudan had announced its unwillingness to schedule another round of direct negotiations with SPLM-N until it was satisfied that South Sudan had terminated its support for SPLM-N. He said that the Government of the Sudan was also unwilling to allow the United Nations proposed vaccination campaign or other humanitarian relief work in the SPLM-N-controlled areas of Southern Kordofan or Blue Nile States because of the SPLM-N demands that such activities should be conducted from the territory of Ethiopia or Kenya. On the Abyei area, the Under-Secretary-General said there had been no progress on either establishing the temporary institutions or on a process to establish final status. Council members expressed serious concerns about the lack of progress, and hoped that the continuing work by the High-level Implementation Panel, IGAD, and the African Union Commission would enable additional progress. Council members also voiced serious concern about the escalation of fighting and the humanitarian situation in the two areas, calling for a cessation of hostilities that would allow humanitarian access and the resumption of political negotiations to resolve the conflict. Some Council members criticized the activities of SPLM-N and the Sudanese Revolutionary Front, urging the Council to increase pressure on the insurgents, while others called on the Sudanese Armed Forces to cease aerial bombardments of civilians.

On 24 July, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sudan and South Sudan, Haile Menkerios, briefed the Council in closed consultations on relations between the two countries, reporting that there had been no progress. He particularly focused on efforts by the High-level Implementation Panel, the African Union Commission and IGAD to resolve disputes between the two countries, in particular on the issue of external support to rebels, and to dissuade the Sudan from executing its announced intention to terminate oil shipments as from 7 August. He expressed the view that shutting off the oil flow before the African Union/IGAD mechanisms set up by President Mbeki had time to work would be counter-productive for both countries. The Special Envoy reported that those investigative and border zone demarcation mechanisms had only just started their work. He also reported that South Sudan had already begun to reduce its oil production and make technical preparations to shut down its oil wells in anticipation of the deadline of 7 August, reducing the oil flow and incurring costs. He also mentioned news media reports indicating that elements of the Sudanese Revolutionary Front had attacked a

Sudanese Armed Forces convoy near Sidra, Northern Kordofan State, in the Sudan. He said there had been no progress on the Abyei area temporary institutions or final status arrangements, and that the situation in Abyei remained tense, particularly after the killing on 4 May of the Paramount Chief, while the High-level Implementation Panel waited for representatives to be appointed for Abyei talks. He said that there had been no progress in providing humanitarian assistance to the SPLM-N-controlled areas of Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile States, although the World Food Programme had provided food assistance to approximately 120,000 civilians in Government-controlled territory in the two areas. He reported that the President of South Sudan had undertaken a major government reshuffle on 23 July, including the firing of his Vice-President, Cabinet, and the secretary-general of the ruling party.

Council members expressed their firm support for President Mbeki and the efforts of the High-level Implementation Panel, the African Union Commission and IGAD to mediate the disputes, and expressed their concerns over the possibility that oil trade between the Sudan and South Sudan might be terminated before the African Union and IGAD dispute resolution measures had had sufficient time to work. Many called for an end to cross-border support to rebel groups. More than half of the Council members also raised the importance of resolving differences over the Abyei area urgently, while one delegation expressed concern at the Ngok Dinka community's rejection of the establishment of the temporary institutions. Several members were concerned by South Sudanese internal stability questions.

On 14 July, the members of the Council issued a statement to the press condemning the attack on a patrol of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) in which 7 Tanzanian peacekeepers were killed and 17 peacekeepers and police were injured and offering their condolences. The members of the Council also called on the Government of the Sudan to swiftly investigate and bring the perpetrators to justice. On 15 July, the Officer-in-Charge of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Assistant Secretary-General for Rule of Law and Security Institutions, Dmitry Titov, briefed the Council on the attack against UNAMID personnel on 13 July. Council members expressed their deep concern over the increase in the number of attacks on UNAMID peacekeepers. Council members once again expressed their condolences to the families of the 7 UNAMID troops killed and 17 injured and called on the Government of the Sudan to investigate the attacks. During his remarks before the Council on 24 and 30 July, the Permanent Representative of the Sudan, Daffa-Alla Elhag Ali Osman, pledged that his Government would pursue the perpetrators and bring them to justice.

On 24 July, the Joint African Union-United Nations Special Representative for Darfur and Head of UNAMID, Mohamed Ibn Chambas, briefed the Council on the volatile security situation in Darfur and his efforts as Joint Chief Mediator to reinvigorate the Darfur peace process, including mediation efforts with non-signatory movements. He stressed that only a political dialogue that addresses the legitimate grievances of the people of Darfur will resolve the conflict. He underlined the importance of the support and engagement of the Council in encouraging the Government of the Sudan to propose a concrete framework for an all-inclusive Darfur internal dialogue and consultations and helping to persuade non-signatory movements to abandon armed struggle and to start peace talks without preconditions on the basis of the Doha Document, which presents the most viable way to sustainable peace in Darfur. He also noted with concern the expansion

of inter-communal conflict over natural resources in Darfur. He called for honouring in a timely manner the pledges made at the Doha donor conference in April 2013 to help to create an environment more conducive to peace in the region. Regarding the effectiveness of UNAMID, he stressed the need for better training and equipment and more flexibility within the mission's current deployment. The Permanent Representative of the Sudan also addressed the Council, emphasizing the need for development assistance and for increased cooperation between UNAMID and local authorities to help to safeguard mission personnel. In closed consultations, several Council members called for a strategic review of the UNAMID mandate. Some others contended that the current mandate was appropriate and sufficient, while echoing the call of the Joint Special Representative for better training and equipment to boost the mission's effectiveness. Several members expressed concern over impediments placed by the Government of the Sudan on UNAMID access. While several members noted the slow pace of progress, most supported the efforts of the Joint Special Representative to revitalize the peace process. Some stressed the need for the Council's increased pressure on non-signatory armed movements to convince the latter to join the Doha peace process.

On 30 July, by resolution 2113 (2013), the Council extended the mandate of UNAMID, reflecting in the resolution changes on the ground, including the deteriorating security and humanitarian situations and attacks on peacekeepers, and requesting a detailed and forward-looking review of the progress of UNAMID towards achieving its mandate.

West Africa

On 10 July, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA), Said Djinnit, briefed the Council on political, economic and security developments and transnational threats to peace and security across West Africa. He cited the need to strengthen regional cooperation to address fragility across the Sahel, Mano River and Gulf of Guinea regions. He stressed the readiness of the United Nations to enhance Nigerian counter-terrorism, human rights, and disaster relief capacity. Council members unanimously supported the efforts of the Special Representative to facilitate the agreement of 3 July between the Government and opposition parties in Guinea and several Council members called for UNOWA to lead the United Nations system-wide efforts to implement the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel. Council members expressed concern about transnational threats, including terrorism, transnational organized crime, and maritime insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea. Some Council members noted the importance of incorporating a human rights component into Nigerian security efforts to combat the threat of Boko Haram.

Asia and Middle East

United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy in Central Asia

On 15 July, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy in Central Asia, Miroslav Jenča, briefed the Council in consultations on the activities of the Centre. He delivered a comprehensive review of the Centre's accomplishments in the five Central Asian States (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and

Uzbekistan) since his briefing to the Council on 29 January. He explained that the Centre had organized three major policy events in 2013 focused on countering terrorism through the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, tackling illegal drug problems related to Afghanistan in coordination with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, and addressing the impact of glacial melting on water management in cooperation with UNESCO and the World Bank. He also noted that the Centre had developed a framework proposal on modernizing the legal framework for transboundary water management in the Aral Sea basin, and also continued to work closely with United Nations country teams on the issues related to conflict prevention, and to encourage cooperation between Afghanistan and the Central Asian States, particularly in the context of their concerns about a post-2014 Afghanistan. He noted that the Centre will remain focused on its three priority areas: the impact of transboundary threats facing the region, the implications of national developments for regional stability, and the management of common natural resources and environmental degradation.

Council members offered unwavering support for the Special Representative and the Centre, particularly the Centre's regional work to counter terrorism, facilitate water and energy management, prepare for a post-2014 Afghanistan, and combat drug trafficking. Council members welcomed the role of the Centre as a successful example of United Nations preventive diplomacy mechanisms. The importance of the Centre's objectivity and consensual approach to its success was noted, as were its initiatives on human rights, refugees, and women and peace and security. Some Council members enquired about the much-delayed World Bank assessment on the Roghun Dam project, and encouraged the Centre's active engagement on the associated political dialogue. In the context of the Centre's strong collaboration with regional organizations, some Council members noted the need for increased cooperation with the Collective Security Treaty Organization, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

The Council issued a statement to the press, reaffirming the importance of the preventive diplomacy mandate of the Centre, particularly its focus on transnational threats and sustainable development.

Iraq

On 16 July, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), Martin Kobler, briefed the Council on the work of UNAMI during the past four months. He noted the Governorate Council elections of 20 April and 20 June, and the improved Iraq-Kuwait relations. However, he voiced concern about continuing challenges regarding Iraq's political and security situation, including increasing sectarian violence, and ongoing efforts to resettle the residents of Camp Hurriya. Council members expressed full support for the United Nations role in Iraq, and commended the leadership of the Special Representative as he reached the end of his tenure and assumed his new position as Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Head of MONUSCO. Members welcomed the successful holding of provincial elections and the developments in Iraq-Kuwait relations, and underlined the importance of implementing resolution 2107 (2013). They expressed their concern about the current political and the deteriorating security situation in Iraq, including the incident of 19 April at Hawija. They also remained worried about the impact of the Syrian crisis on Iraq and joined the

Special Representative in calling for the border crossings to be reopened for refugees from the Syrian Arab Republic to Iraq. There was broad support from members for renewing the UNAMI mandate for another 12 months and the mandate was renewed on 30 July.

Lebanon

On 9 July, the Special Coordinator of the Secretary-General for Lebanon, Derek Plumbly, and the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations briefed the Council in closed consultations on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) and on the activities of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) over the past four months. The Special Coordinator mentioned the negative effect of the violence in the Syrian Arab Republic on Lebanon, particularly the repeated incidents of cross-border fire, the strain caused by the influx of 590,000 Syrian refugees and rising sectarian tensions. He also discussed the acknowledged participation of Hizbullah in the Syrian conflict and underlined the need for all Lebanese parties to recommit themselves to the Baabda Declaration and the policy of disassociation. He noted the important role President Michel Sleiman and the Lebanese Armed Forces had played in preserving Lebanon's stability. The Special Coordinator expressed his concern at repeated Israeli violations of Lebanon's airspace. The majority of the members of the Council expressed concern at the Israeli violations of Lebanon's sovereignty. Council members expressed their support for Lebanon's policy of disassociation from the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic. Some members emphasized the need to combat arms trafficking across the Syria-Lebanon border. Other members focused on the threat of Hizbullah and the border incursions by Syrian armed forces. Following the meeting, the Council released a statement to the press, condemning the terrorist bombing in Beirut on 9 July. The Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2013/9) on 10 July, in which it expressed growing concern at the impact of the Syrian crisis on Lebanon, called upon all Lebanese parties to respect the policy of disassociation, and expressed support for President Sleiman and the Lebanese Armed Forces in maintaining stability.

Afghanistan

On 11 July, the Deputy Secretary-General, Jan Eliasson, briefed the Council in consultations on his visit to Afghanistan from 28 June to 2 July. He reported on his meetings with President Hamid Karzai, various Afghan Government ministers and senior officials, the Speakers of the Wolesi Jirga and Meshrano Jirga (Lower and Upper Houses of Parliament, respectively), members of the High Peace Council, officials from the Independent Election Commission, the Chairperson of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, and representatives of political parties and civil society groups. He also visited Kandahar Province, where he met the Governor and Provincial Council. Topics discussed at his meetings included the 2014 presidential election, the security situation in Afghanistan, ongoing peace and reconciliation efforts, humanitarian and development aid, human rights, the rule of law, and support from the international community, including the United Nations, during and after the country's transition in 2014. The Deputy Secretary-General emphasized the importance of the United Nations continued engagement in Afghanistan after the 2014 transition and the holding of an inclusive, transparent and credible election that year. Council members expressed their support

for the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan and the United Nations ongoing role in Afghanistan and stressed the importance of having an electoral framework in place soon so that the election in 2014 is free and fair and has wide participation from Afghans. Many Council members also highlighted the importance of continued improvement of human rights in Afghanistan — especially for women — and of the United Nations role in assisting Afghanistan to expand women's political participation. Some Council members expressed concern about the security challenges for Afghanistan after 2014. A proposal to consider a Security Council trip to Afghanistan was discussed.

Non-proliferation/Islamic Republic of Iran

On 15 July, the members of the Council held a public meeting to hear an open briefing by the Permanent Representative of Australia, Gary Quinlan, in his capacity as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1737 (2006), on the work of the Committee from 6 March to 15 July 2013. He noted the Committee's consideration of the final report of the Panel of Experts, as well as its review of alleged violations and responses to communications from Member States. He said the Committee was exploring appropriate responses to the Panel's unanimous conclusion that launches by the Islamic Republic of Iran of Shahab 1 and 3 missiles constituted a violation of resolution 1929 (2010), as did an incident reported by a Member State involving the interception in January 2013 of a vessel suspected of carrying illicit weapons from the Islamic Republic of Iran to be delivered to that State.

The members of the Council commended the efforts of the Committee in carrying out its mandate and renewed their support for the work of the Committee and the Panel. The members of the Council reiterated their support for negotiations in the "five plus one" framework and underlined the need to pursue a comprehensive solution to the Iranian nuclear issue through dialogue and negotiations. Some members expressed grave concerns regarding continued non-compliance by the Islamic Republic of Iran with resolutions of the Security Council and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), as documented by the IAEA Director General, and also about alleged violations of the sanctions. Some members emphasized the need for the work of the Committee and the Panel to be neutral and impartial, and based on clear facts and hard evidence. Members of the Council generally supported the Committee's outreach efforts, including its recent open briefing to the United Nations membership.

Middle East (Syrian Arab Republic)

On 16 July, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Valerie Amos, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Antonio Guterres, and the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, Ivan Šimonović, briefed the Council on the worsening Syrian crisis. The Under-Secretary-General described the situation as an unfolding human tragedy in which at least 6.8 million Syrians required urgent humanitarian assistance, including more than 4.2 million internally displaced people, and called for a "mix of approaches" to address the humanitarian challenges in the Syrian Arab Republic. The High Commissioner stressed that the situation in the country cannot be treated as a humanitarian emergency, but that a longer-term development strategy is needed. He reiterated his call on all States to keep their borders open to Syrians who seek protection. The Assistant Secretary-

General said that the supply of weapons to both sides must stop and that the solution should be political, not military. He added that parties must initiate immediate negotiations to reduce violence and human rights violations, and improve the protection of civilians. He expressed concern at the use of rhetoric by religious and political leaders in the Syrian Arab Republic and the region that could exacerbate the existing sectarian tension. Representatives of Member States whose interests are specifically affected were invited to participate and made statements.

In closed consultations, Council members agreed that a political solution is needed to end the humanitarian conflict, but varied in their views of the roles of the Government and the opposition in perpetuating and helping to mitigate the humanitarian crisis. Many members emphasized that those who had committed human rights violations must be held accountable, and some called for referring the situation to the International Criminal Court. One member said that the United Nations had not adequately addressed abuses reportedly committed by the opposition, while other members described the impact of hosting growing Syrian refugee populations.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

In the Council's open debate on the situation in the Middle East on 23 July, the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Robert Serry, welcomed the recent announcement by the United States Secretary of State, John F. Kerry, that a basis had been established to resume direct talks between the Israelis and the Palestinians. However, he noted that the parties faced tough choices and would need to secure domestic support to renew negotiations. He welcomed the support of the Arab League and Jordan for renewed talks, and encouraged broader regional and international support for the current diplomatic initiative. Progress would also require a credible political horizon and accompanying effort to improve the situation on the ground, he said. Both the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine and the Permanent Representative of Israel made statements. Many Council members welcomed recent progress on Middle East peace, while acknowledging that the parties would still need to face many challenging issues. Several members called for a halt to Israeli settlement activity as well as the lifting of restrictions on the Gaza Strip. Some members also called for a halt to rocket fire from the Gaza Strip into Israel. Members also focused on the violence and the deteriorating humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, and most emphasized that a political solution was the only durable way to end the crisis. Most members stated support for a second Geneva conference and expressed concern about the delay. Some members emphasized the need for accountability for all acts of violence, and others repeated that arming the sides would not help to end the conflict. Some countries reiterated that the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic should be referred to the International Criminal Court. Members also stated concern about the growing impact of the Syrian crisis on stability and security in Lebanon and the broader region. Some members highlighted that political developments in Egypt were also of serious concern.

Europe

Cyprus

On 15 July, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP), Lisa Buttenheim, briefed the Council in closed consultations on the situation in Cyprus, which she described as generally calm and stable. She expressed concern, however, that parties continue to circumvent the authority of UNFICYP within the buffer zone. Members of the Council expressed support for extending the UNFICYP mandate. Council members called on all parties concerned to respect the authority of UNFICYP within the buffer zone and expressed support for renewed negotiations to resolve the Cyprus question.

On 30 July, by resolution 2114 (2013), the Council extended the mandate of UNFICYP.

Thematic issues

Protection of civilians in armed conflict: protection of journalists

On 17 July, the Council held an open debate on the protection of journalists in armed conflict. This was the first Council meeting devoted to this subject since the adoption of resolution 1738 (2006) in December 2006. Council members renewed their support for resolution 1738 (2006) and proposed ways to enhance its implementation. Most Council members also referred to the presidential statement of 12 February 2013 (S/PRST/2013/2) on the protection of civilians, in which, as in resolution 1738 (2006), the Council recalled that journalists, media professionals and associated personnel engaged in dangerous professional missions in areas of armed conflict shall be considered as civilians and shall be respected and protected as such, provided that they take no action adversely affecting their status as civilians. The Council received a briefing from the Deputy Secretary-General, who noted that in the past decade more than 600 journalists had been killed, and that the majority of the victims are local journalists and media staff who were reporting on corruption and other illegal activities. The Council also received briefings from four journalists, Kathleen Carroll, Richard Engel, Ghaith Abdul-Ahad and Mustafa Haji Abdinur, which marked the first time that journalists had briefed the Security Council.